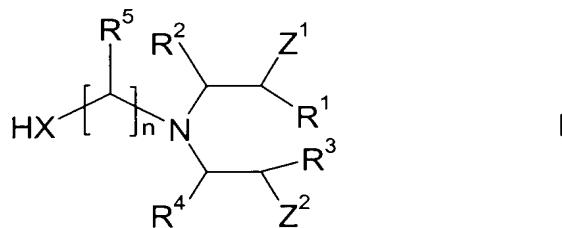


IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A process for preparing hyperbranched polymers comprising reacting compounds of the formula I



where

X is sulfur or oxygen,

R¹ and R³ are identical or different and are hydrogen, C₁-C₆ alkyl,

C₃-C₁₂ cycloalkyl or C₆-C₁₄ aryl,

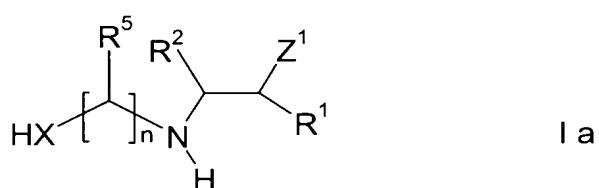
R² and R⁴ are identical or different and are hydrogen, C₁-C₆ alkyl, C₃-C₁₂ cycloalkyl, C₆-C₁₄ aryl,

Z¹ and Z² are identical or different and are COOH or COOR⁶, the radicals R⁶ being identical or different and being C₁-C₆ alkyl, formyl or CO-C₁-C₆ alkyl,

R⁵ identically or differently at each occurrence is C₁-C₆ alkyl or hydrogen, and

n is an integer from 2 to 10,

optionally with at least one compound of the formula I a



where the variables are as defined above,

in the presence of a catalyst,

wherein the reaction is carried out in the presence or absence of at least one polyfunctional compound, wherein when the polyfunctional compound is a tricarboxylic acid, and when the tricarboxylic acid is present, it is a benzenetricarboxylic acid, or a monoester, diester, triester, halide, or anhydride thereof.

Claim 2 (Original): The process according to claim 1, wherein R^1 and R^3 in formula I are identical.

Claim 3 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein R^2 and R^4 in formula I are identical.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein Z^1 and Z^2 in formula I are each COOH.

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein Z^1 and Z^2 in formula I are each $COOR^6$.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein the radicals R^6 in formula I are each identical.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein R^1 and R^3 in formula I are each identical and are methyl or hydrogen, R^2 and R^4 in formula I are each hydrogen, and Z^1 and Z^2 in formula I are each $COOR^6$.

Claim 8 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein from 0 to 1 000% by weight of compound of the formula I a are used, based on compound of the formula I.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein the reaction is carried out in the presence of the at least one polyfunctional compound.

Claim 10 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein the reaction is carried out in the presence of at least one enzyme.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein the reaction is carried out in the presence of an acidic inorganic, organometallic or organic catalyst or a mixture of two or more acidic inorganic, organometallic or organic catalysts.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented): A hyperbranched polymer obtained by the process according to claim 1.

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): A process for preparing hydrophilically modified hyperbranched polymers, comprising reacting the hyperbranched polymer according to claim 12 with a hydrophilic compound.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): A hydrophilically modified hyperbranched polymer obtained by the process according to claim 13.

Claim 15 (Previously Presented): A process for preparing hydrophobically modified hyperbranched polymers, comprising reacting the hyperbranched polymer according to claim 12 with at least one hydrophobic alcohol.

Claim 16 (Previously Presented): A hydrophobically modified hyperbranched polymer obtained by the process according to claim 15.

Claim 17 (Previously Presented): A process for preparing hyperbranched polymers modified with at least one ethylenically unsaturated compound, comprising reacting the hyperbranched polymer according to claim 12 with at least one alcohol or amine which has an ethylenically unsaturated double bond.

Claim 18 (Previously Presented): A hyperbranched polymer modified with at least one ethylenically unsaturated compound, obtained by the process according to claim 17.

Claim 19 (Previously Presented): A method for producing a formulation wherein said formulation is an adhesive, a coating, a foam, a covering, a printing ink or a varnish, comprising adding the hyperbranched polymer according to claim 12 to said formulation.

Claim 20 (Previously Presented): A printing ink prepared by utilizing the hyperbranched polymer according to claim 12 in a printing ink formulation.

Claim 21 (Previously Presented): A print varnish prepared by utilizing the hyperbranched polymer according to claim 12 in a print varnish formulation.

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Claim 22 (Previously Presented): A print varnish prepared by utilizing the hyperbranched polymer modified with at least one ethylenically unsaturated compound according to claim 17 in a print varnish formulation.